



# City of Woonsocket, RI

Planning Board | Design Review Commission | River Corridor Review Commission Meeting Minutes

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, December 13, 2022 | 6PM

**Location:** 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room – City Hall, 169 Main Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Finlay called the joint meeting to order at 6:00PM.

## II. ATTENDANCE REVIEW

Members / Commissioners in Attendance:

1. Kenneth Finlay, Chair
2. Wendall Gardner, Vice-Chair
3. Barbara Scanlon, Secretary
4. Radames Figueroa, Member / Commissioner
5. Jonathan Pratt, Member / Commissioner

Staff in Attendance:

1. Kenneth Kirkland, City Planner | Administrative / Design / River Corridor Review Officer
2. Veronicka Vega, Recording Secretary

## III. REVIEW / APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the Planning Board Minutes of October 11, 2022: Secretary Scanlon

Second: Vice-Chair Gardner

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay:	Yes
Vice-Chair Gardner:	Yes
Secretary Scanlon:	Yes
Member Figueroa:	Yes
Member Pratt:	Yes

**MOTION** **PASSED** **5 – 0 – 0**

Motion to approve the Design Review Commission Minutes of October 11, 2022: Vice-Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Scanlon

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay:	Yes
Vice-Chair Gardner:	Yes
Secretary Scanlon:	Yes
Commissioner Figueroa:	Yes
Commissioner Pratt:	Yes

**MOTION** **PASSED** **5 – 0 – 0**

#### IV. NEW BUSINESS

##### A. Subdivisions & Land Development Projects

###### 1. 48 Chester Street | Map B4, Lot 21-165 | Zone: R-4

The Proposal is to subdivide the existing lot with two (2) residential dwellings into two (2) lots, with one (1) lot for each dwelling. The existing lot is approximately 7,500 sq. ft. No further development is proposed at this time.

Applicant/Owner: Diamond, LLC; Michael McHugh & John Garrahy, Esq., Representatives

There was a brief presentation by Owner representatives Mr. McHugh, a design expert, and Attorney Garrahy, a land-use expert. They illustrated the Proposal to split the existing lot in half and establish a separate lot for each of the existing dwellings; since the area is already built out, no further development or construction is proposed or possible. It was further explained that zoning relief would be required for frontage and lot area. Both residential dwellings share municipal water and sewer connections, and the Board suggested that a maintenance and use agreement be drafted and recorded with the deeds in the event of future property sale. The parking issue was discussed, and the Representatives assured the Board that an access easement would be similarly drafted for the existing parking lot, which is currently accessed off Chester Street.

City Planner Kirkland presented the Staff Report dated December 9, 2022 and noted that the Plan underwent municipal review, and no major issues were raised regarding the proposed Lots, although the Zoning Official noted the existing houses have a pre-existing, non-conforming setbacks. Noting that as the Proposal seeks a number of variances (dimensional) from the Zoning Board of Review, an advisory recommendation from the Planning Board is required under State law. Staff Report Section IX details the required Findings of Fact, and Section X details Staff's commentary on the Planning Board's advisory recommendation. Chair Finlay read and specifically incorporated Staff Report Sections IX-XII into the record.

Motion to grant Preliminary Plan approval subject to the conditions outlined in the Staff Report dated December 9, 2022 and to forward a neutral recommendation to the Zoning Board of Review: Vice- Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Scanlon

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay:	Yes
Vice-Chair Gardner:	Yes
Secretary Scanlon:	Yes
Member Figueroa	Yes
Member Pratt:	Yes

**MOTION**

**PASSED**

**5 – 0 – 0**

###### 2. 168-170 Spring Street | Map C3, Lot 21-165 | Zone: R-4

The Proposal is to subdivide the existing lot with two (2) residential dwellings into two (2) lots, with one (1) lot for each dwelling. The existing lot is approximately 37,313 sq. ft. No further development is proposed at this time.

Applicant/Owner: George Jackson

Property Owner Mr. Jackson summarized his plan to subdivide the existing lot into two (2) separate lots for each of the existing houses so that he may sell the rear house, (former sexton's house). The Owner explained that there are existing easements in place for access.

City Planner Kirkland stated that this Proposal was initially started two preceding City Planners ago, and that the drawn-out process was primarily due to receiving utility easement language from National Grid for the existing electrical services. City Planner Kirkland noted that a number of easements for other utilities and access currently service the site, and that some services are separated, while others are in the

process of being separated. He presented the Staff Report dated December 9, 2022 and noted that the Report is essentially the same as those provided for the project at 48 Chester Street, but specifically emphasized the Proposal represents the unique challenges faced with redevelopment / reuse of surplus ecclesiastical (religious) properties, which is not uncommon to older cities.

Noting that as the Proposal seeks a variance (dimensional) from the Zoning Board of Review, an advisory recommendation from the Planning Board is required under State law. Staff Report Section IX details the required Findings of Fact, and Section X details Staff's commentary on the Planning Board's advisory recommendation. Chair Finlay read and specifically incorporated Staff Report Sections IX-XII into the record.

Motion to grant Preliminary Plan approval subject to the conditions outlined in the Staff Report dated December 9, 2022 and to forward a neutral recommendation to the Zoning Board of Review: Vice- Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Scanlon

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay:	Yes
Vice-Chair Gardner:	Yes
Secretary Scanlon:	Yes
Member Figueroa	Yes
Member Pratt:	Yes

**MOTION**

**PASSED**

**5 – 0 – 0**

3. Mill Race: 15 Island Place & 68 S. Main Street | Map E3, Lots 14-143, 14-144, 14-371, & 14-387

Zone: MU-2, DROD, DOD

Public Informational – Minor Modification

Applicant/Owner: The Millrace District, L.P.; Joseph Garlick, Representative

The Commissions are responding to a minor modification request dated December 8, 2022 to modify the Commissions' Decision recorded in the City Clerk's Land Evidence Records Office in Book 2757 Page 329 regarding analysis of the number of parking spaces provided relative to the number of dwelling units proposed. No other corrections, amendments, or modifications are proposed at this time.

Mr. Garlick explained the increased number of proposed live-work units, (from 56 to 70) necessitated additional parking, which was accomplished by a slight reconfiguration of the proposed parking layout, which was not outside of the overall proposed disturbance area. The Commission questioned how and why the Applicant felt that a unit increase could occur; Mr. Garlick stated that the original layout was based off of a conservative calculation due to environmental factors that were of unknown effect on the Project at the time, and that subsequent environmental results enabled a larger unit count than initially anticipated. He further stated that the additional units were to be live-work as well, and there was no intent to include any affordable units. There were no changes to the exterior façade either, as the additional units were accomplished through an internal building layout reconfiguration. The Commission asked whether the utility services connections had been calculated using the original 56 or the newly proposed 70, to which Commissioner Pratt stated it was reviewed at 70, which the Petition to Connect Form confirmed.

The Commission expressed concern that the increase in proposed units was not brought before them. City Planner Kirkland concurred and noted that this Project initially started two preceding City Planners ago. He confirmed for the Commission that the Project did not require zoning approval as the uses (live-work and commercial) are by-right in the districts where the Project is located, and while the parking and additional units were accommodated with minimal layout changes, the Commission felt that ultimately, their review was based off the originally proposed 56, and not 70, and noted that at no time did the Applicant provide updated plans reflecting the increased number of units in smaller size. Chair Finlay

expressed the Commissions' desire to see a revised plan set for the increased number of units with floor layouts.

Motion to table the discussion to the January 2023 Meeting: Vice-Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Scanlon

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay: Yes

Vice-Chair Gardner: Yes

Secretary Scanlon: Yes

Commissioner Figueroa: Yes

Commissioner Pratt: Yes

**MOTION**

**PASSED**

**5 - 0 - 0**

**B. City Code of Ordinances**

**1. City Code**

**a. Potential Amendment**

Public Informational

The Board discussed the benefits of protecting public trees and codifying it into the City Code. City Planner Kirkland discussed the benefits of a Tree City USA certification for the City.

**2. Appendix C: Zoning Ordinance**

**a. Potential Amendment**

Public Informational

The Board discussed a potential amendment for signage relating to marijuana facilities, particularly relating to lighting, illumination, number, and glass frosting, as well as use districts. The Board clarified this was not in response to any particular proposal, but the Board felt it was beneficial to be proactive in light of recent legislative changes and agreed to draft an amendment, with the assistance of the Zoning Board of Review and would like to hold a working session with the City Council in the near future regarding such an amendment.

**V. OLD/ONGOING BUSINESS**

**A. Discussion Regarding Parking Regulations**

The Board discussed the information about parking regulations and felt that the working draft was a good start and should include a parking analysis for recreational marijuana facilities as a use, but agreed to table it for further discussion after the New Year, but agreed that a formal recommendation to the City Council would be advisable in the near future with said working draft.

**VI. ADMINISTRATIVE/ DESIGN REVIEW/ RIVER CORRIDOR REVIEW OFFICER'S REPORT**

**A. 2023 Annual Meeting Schedule & Annual Report (Planning Board)**

City Planner Kirkland presented the Annual Meeting Schedule and Annual Report for the Planning Board. The meeting schedule would be provided to the Secretary of State as required, as well as uploaded to the webpage and emailed to all interested parties.

**VII. CITIZEN COMMENTARY**

**VIII. UPCOMING MEETING(S): Tuesday, January 3, 2023 – 6PM**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the joint meeting at 7:36PM: Vice-Chair Gardner

Second: Member / Commissioner Figueroa

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay: Yes

Vice-Chair Gardner: Yes

Secretary Scanlon Yes

Member / Commissioner Figueroa Yes

Member / Commissioner Pratt: Yes

**MOTION**

**PASSED**

**5 - 0 - 0**

Respectfully Submitted,

Veronica Vega

Recording Secretary